



**PUBLIC SERVICES ASSOCIATION
OF TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO**


**Brief History
of the
Public Services
Association**


PSA MOTTO:


“OMINIBUS CONJUNCTIS SPECS SINGULIS”


*“All United in A
Single Hope, Single Purpose and Endeavour”*

THE BIRTH OF THE CIVIL SERVICE ASSOCIATION (C.S.A.)

riginally known as the Civil Services Association (C.S.A.), this Union was formed during the period of colonial dominance. At that time the system in the Civil Service was an inherently unfair one, to say the least. Heads of Departments had the authority to impose fines on their officers, the opportunities for promotion were almost non-existent. An officer of the junior ranks could hardly aspire to anything above the principal officer category.

he system was plagued with other problems. Apart from poor working conditions there was the question of racial discrimination. If a Trinidadian did not belong to the French Creole Class, he could hardly ever aspire to anything above Junior Clerk. Promotion also depended on the size and complexity of the department to which one was appointed.

n 1962 when it was decided that the minimum entry qualification into the public service should be the possession of a Cambridge School Certificate. At that time very few Trinidadians possessed this minimum qualification and therefore upward mobility was confined to just a few.

ndividual protest was suicidal, collective action was beyond imagination, yet the initiative to correct a grave imbalance had to be taken.

It was a handful of men who pioneered the formation of the C.S.A., A.A. Thompson, E. Patience and J. Superville. They were later joined by C. Worrell W. Gilkes, John L. Smith, Miss Carr, H. Mc Clean, S. Knowles, H. Deeble, A. Ward, C. Knights, G. Stanford, W. Gocking and others.

John Lyon Smith in an interview with the daily Mirror Sept. 28, 1964 said that the first department to organise itself was the Post Office where Thompson was stationed. There was however agitation in other areas resulting in several caucas meetings being held. Kitson in his unpublished thesis of 1972 says that Thompson received assistance from Quinton O'Connor and Ralph Mentor who by that time were veterans in the Trade Union movement. He also held the view that the legal advice given by C. Worrell from the Legal Department was of tremendous assistance in the early stages of the Association.

At a meeting of Civil Servants on Saturday November 19. 1938 it was resolved "that this representative body of Civil Servants here assembled are of the opinion that a Civil Service Association of the Colony of Trinidad and Tobago be immediately formed. "Eric Patience performed the duties of temporary Secretary of a Provisional Committee until December 19, 1938 when a formal constitution was adopted and elections held for the first officers and members of Executive of the C.S.A.

